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ters, and the village constitutes a unit for all dances; in fact this ceremonial unity is its most important function.

With the exception of a few villages built on the seashore, each Bella Coola settlement consists of a row of houses on the river bank. These are of the usual rectangular, plank-built type typical of the North-West Coast. In front of them stretches a sidewalk, usually supported by piles on the side nearest the river to make it level. The houses, too, in many cases have piles beneath their front ends, made necessary by the steep slope of the bank. In large villages there may be two rows of houses, behind and above one another. Usually there

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is a rough path parallel to the row of houses at the very edge of the river. The number of houses varies; before the smallpox epidemic some villages contained as many as thirty or forty, others, only two or three. There is no definite arrangement of the houses; anyone may build where there is a vacant space.

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Much the same arrangement occurs in the sea-coast villages, each of which depends for its main sustenance on an ocean fish-trap, as the river villages depend on a salmon-weir.

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The central part of each house is occupied by a large fire, often sunk a considerable distance below the level of the floor, and around this is an open space free to all. Toward the side-walls are raised the partitions, forming bedrooms for the different families, or for different members of one. In many cases the flooring is removed in three or four parts of the house for small fires on which different groups cook, the central fire being used for heating and for more important meals. The

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number of families occupying a house depends on its size; an important chief, with many relatives, often builds an enormous house which is occupied by ten or more families; smaller houses contain only two or three. Life in the larger houses is free and open; people are constantly passing in and out, and any-

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one present when food is being distributed is given a share as a matter of course. Most of the houses are decorated with carved upright posts and paintings on the beams and back-wall. A door through the latter leads to the back-room, so important in dances.